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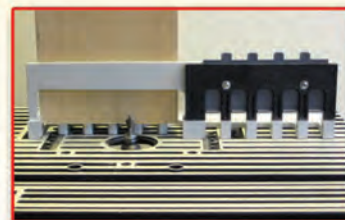


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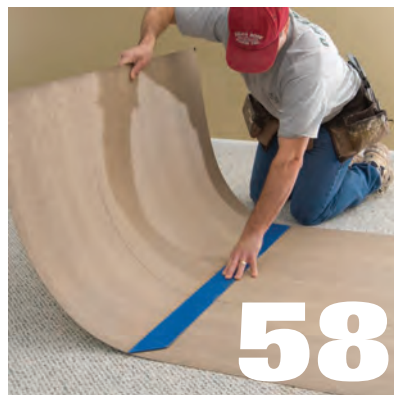
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Too much window and not enough wall is a big problem when upgrading some kitchens. Here's how to solve it.

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The following items make a good “starter” weatherization kit for practically any homeowner who wants to better seal their home from the elements:

Caulk gun	\$12
Silicone sealant (3 tubes)	\$21
Weather stripping (3 rolls)	\$18
Spray foam sealant (3 cans)	\$18
HVAC tape	\$13

Those items total about \$82 plus tax, and you can guesstimate a labor rate for applying the stuff, which shouldn't take too long or be very expensive.

Compare that to a recent report by the Government Accountability Office, which states that as of December 31, 2009, a total of 9,100 homes had been weatherized with funds from the Federal Government's Reinvestment and Recovery Act, AKA the “Stimulus Plan.”

The Department of Energy claims that approximately \$522 million Recovery Act dollars have been spent on weatherization. After a little back-of-the-napkin math, it looks like so far the American taxpayer is forking over \$57,362 for each home that our Government has “weatherized.”

But wait, according to ABC News, the Department of Energy (which runs the weatherization program) says it actually weatherized more than 22,000 homes last year with Recovery Act funds. Well, okay, I'll be generous and play with that figure. That means—best case scenario—the taxpayer is getting away with a steal at only \$23,727 per home.

Let that sink in. Bang head. Refocus.

I thought I'd use my opening column to shed some light on this situation so it doesn't slip under the radar, like so many other shady backroom deals in D.C. Editorial decorum prevents me from publishing the litany of expletives that would reflect my thoughts on having so much of our tax revenue inexplicably flushed down the drain, so I'll leave it to you, Faithful Reader, to draw your own conclusions regarding the wisdom of our leaders in Washington.

Thanks for reading and remember to vote,



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Q. I varnished a table with a satin-finish polyurethane product. After it dried, some areas were glossy while other areas were nearly matte flat. What caused this to happen, and can I repair it?

A. Satin polyurethane is essentially the same type of product as the gloss variety, but it contains a flattening paste in the material to create the lower sheen. Because clear urethane products have very low viscosity, some of the flattening paste tends to settle to the bottom of the can. For this reason, it is important to stir the product frequently as you work to ensure greater uniformity of sheen. If the finishing product was applied without being adequately stirred, the resulting sheen will likely be inconsistent as you described. To fix this, allow the clear coat to dry completely. Lightly sand the work surface to dull the existing finish and promote better adhesion of the following coat. Then, apply a thin, final thin coat of the satin product. Be sure to stir frequently when applying to ensure the final finish is consistently satin throughout. (information courtesy Sherwin-Williams)

Q. I'd like to purchase an HDMI cable for my new HDTV, but the 6-foot cables at the electronics store are \$50 each. I've found some cheaper cables online for only about \$10. Is there any advantage to paying for the more expensive cable?

A. An HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) cable is a type of digital connection that can transmit high-definition video and high-resolution audio over a single cable, rather than using a bundle of analog and component-video cables. Regardless of what the salesman at the electronics store may tell you, there is no significant difference between the \$10 cable and the \$50 version. The digital information transmitted by both cables is exactly the same, and no HDMI cable will make the picture any better or worse than another HDMI cable.

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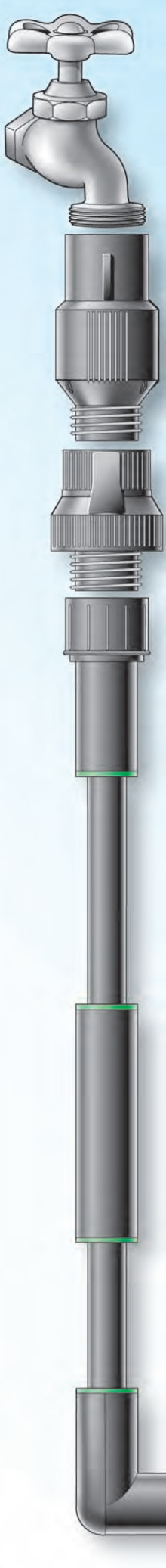


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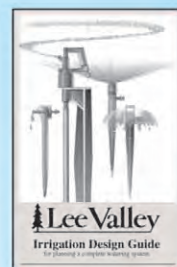
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Q: I've heard that the new CFL (compact fluorescent light) bulbs are incompatible with dimmer switches. Is this true?

A: The problem with most CFLs and dimmer switches is that dimmers work by breaking up the amount of electricity reaching the light fixture. This staggered electrical current is actually making the light flicker, which works fine for a traditional incandescent bulb because the dimming action simply reduces the amount of heat produced by the filament. CFLs, on the other hand, do not use heat to produce light. The new fluorescent bulbs contain a gas that produces invisible ultraviolet light when excited by electricity. When the light hits the white coating inside the CFL, the coating converts it into white light. During this process, fluorescent bulbs regulate power through the tube, which is not compatible with the dimmer's intervals of electricity interruption. This means that when working with a standard CFL, a dimmer would cause the CFL to dim or flicker erratically and eventually go out altogether. It shortens the life of the CFL and, in some rare cases, a dimmer operating a standard CFL could result in a fire.

However, evolving technology is addressing the incompatibility issue, and currently there are Energy Star-qualified CFLs that are specially designed to work with dimmers and are labeled accordingly. These bulbs are more expensive than regular CFLs (about \$12), but offer all the regular energy-saving benefits. Aside from price, dimmable CFLs do have some other shortcomings: They only dim to roughly 20 percent of the rated lumens, and when turned down further they turn off completely. Furthermore, as traditional incandescent bulbs get dimmer, the light gets softer, but dimmable CFLs don't share that characteristic. If you aren't comfortable shelling out \$12 for a dimmable CFL, you can simply dim an incandescent bulb, which is already saving energy and extending the life of the bulb. (information courtesy American Lighting Association) **EHT**

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New Trends in Lawn Tools

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By Matt Weber

Mowing the lawn can be a divisive chore among homeowners. Some find it to be a relaxing opportunity for some peaceful “alone time,” while others consider it sheer drudgery, like Sisyphus rolling his mythical boulder up the mountain, over and over again. The dividing line often falls somewhere between whether or not the homeowner is riding a mower like a chariot or pushing it, like that rock.

Walk-behind mowers definitely have their advantages. Whether they require the user to push them, or feature a self-propelled design that reduces user fatigue, they all require a bit of exercise, and that’s a not a bad thing whether or not you want to admit

it. Beyond that, walk-behind mowers are invariably less expensive and require much less space for storage. Compared to ride-on mowers, the streamlined design of a walk-behind also requires less maintenance and has fewer parts to malfunction.

WEEDEATER ONE

The *EHT* staff recently tested a new ride-on mower that offers many of the key benefits of a walk-behind—simplicity, affordability, reliability—but in an extremely compact design. The WeedEater One is a compact ride-on mower with a rear-mounted engine that provides a simple solution for cutting small to mid-size yards.

Husqvarna’s new WeedEater One is a compact ride-on mower with a scaled-down price tag for small to mid-size lawns.

Upon first glance at the Husqvarna’s WeedEater One, everyone on the *EHT* staff thought of the old Murray-brand mowers of yesteryear. Thousands of those type rear-engine mowers dotted the American landscape a decade ago, but most manufacturers have since favored the hooded design of front-mounted engines. Going against the grain, Husqvarna returned to the rear-mount style, tucking the engine right behind the mowing deck for a smaller overall footprint.

The WeedEater One’s small size makes the mower extremely maneuverable and the steering very responsive. For a size comparison, I tracked down an old 1990’s model Murray rear-engine mower. While this article should



Despite having a smaller overall footprint, the WeedEater One features a more comfortable and spacious operator’s area than older styles of mowers with rear-mounted engines.

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not be mistaken for a side-by-side comparison between the two units (which would be completely unfair to Murray), I thought that photographing the new unit next to old Murray might provide a sense of scale to people familiar with the old style. You'll notice in the photo that the heavy fenders and sheet-metal housing have been replaced with a few strategically placed plastic shields and a very efficient twin-tube steel frame to support the entire vehicle. And, although the WeedEater One is smaller in stature, it's operator's station is more spacious and comfortable than old rear-mount models, including a padded steering wheel, lower footrests for increased leg room, as well as an adjustable high-backed supportive seat.



With smaller wheels and fewer metal components, the WeedEater One weighs less and handles more nimbly than older mowers of similar style.

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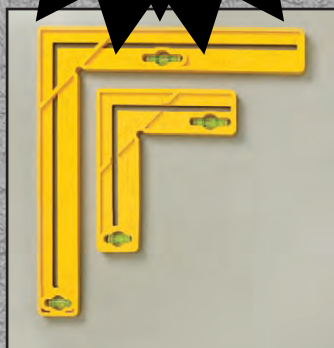
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Simple operation is another key design element of the WeedEater One. It features a single blade, with one pedal to engage it and another to adjust its cutting height. The mower also features a single brake/clutch pedal and an easy-to-reach gear-box that offers three forward speeds and reverse. The engine starts with a key-start ignition (with recoil as backup).

It should be noted that with its compact design comes certain sacrifices. You should not expect to use the WeedEater One as a utility tractor. You'll get no towing capacity from this thing, and it struggles when climbing inclines greater than 15 degrees.

The WeedEater One is a purpose-built machine—for mowing grass only—and with that in



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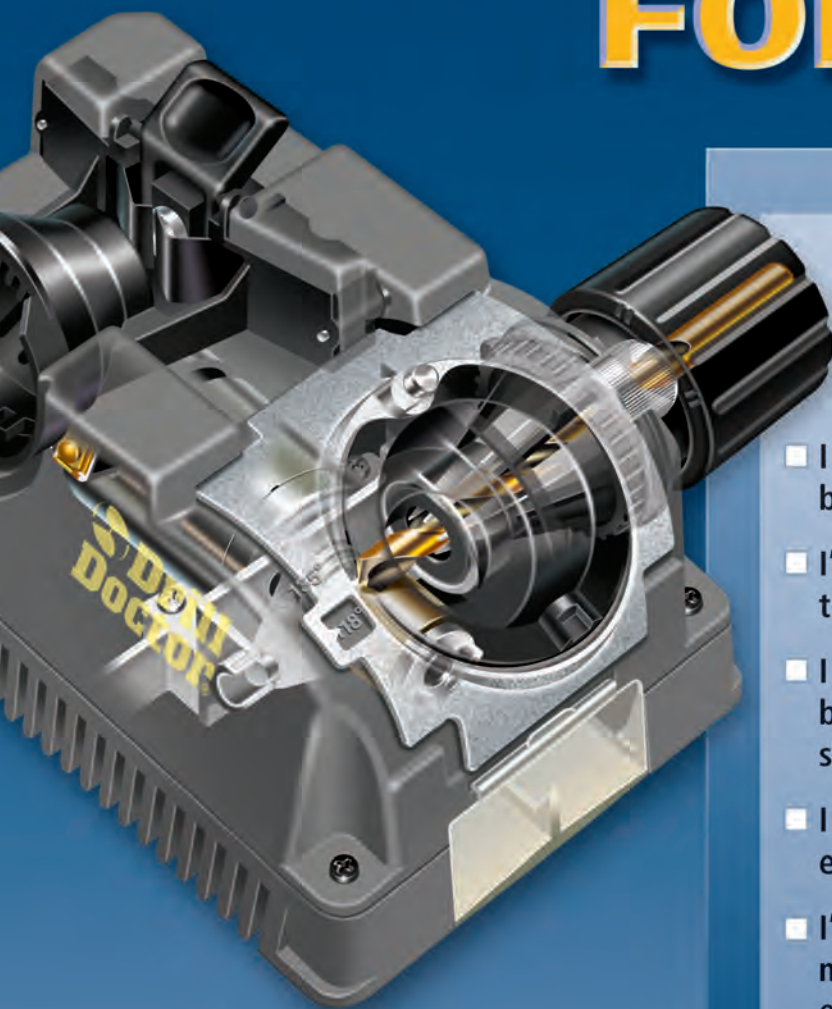


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focus, Husqvarna did not skimp on the cutting performance. The unit is powered by a relatively clean and quiet 875 Series Briggs & Stratton engine with a ReadyStart system that eliminates the need to choke or prime. The 26-inch LawnScaper deck system features a single mulching blade with 3-inch blade height adjustment, and the entire mower is carried by 13-inch (rear) and 10-inch pneumatic tires, and backed by a 2-year warranty.

The WeedEater One has a MSRP of \$699, which makes it more expensive than most high-end, walk-behind mowers but less expensive than the most modestly priced ride-ons, filling a much-needed niche for homeowners who want a compromise between the two.

RYOBI ONE+ 18V LAWN TOOLS

Ryobi has simplified a cordless line of lawn and garden tools with interchangeable 18-volt lithium-ion batteries (www.ryobitools.com). Rather than priming, choking or pulling cords, or mixing, pouring and storing fuel, just pop in a battery and power up a string trimmer, hedge trimmer, sweeper or even a chainsaw.

Without the messy gas and oil, maintenance issues take a back-seat to convenience. Simply keep a battery charged up, and these tools are conveniently ready-to-use when you need them. The nature of lithium-ion batteries means they hold a charge longer without fading than the older nickel-cadmium batteries, and they recharge faster (one hour).



Ryobi's One+ lineup includes four new 18-volt lawn tools, including a cordless string trimmer.



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Plus, Ryobi's new One+ lithium-ion batteries are also interchangeable with other tools in the company's One+ system, so they can be used for One+ tools that you may already own.

Weighing only 7-1/2 pounds, the new Ryobi lithium-ion string trimmer is easy to handle and features telescopic height adjustment and a 12-inch cutting swath. It features a hands-free, bump-feed head to extend the string—a single .065 trimmer line. The trimmer also features a flip-out guard at the pivoting head and a rotating handle, so it can also be used for edging applications.

Usually called a “blower” down here in the Deep South, Ryobi's scaled-down 18-volt Sweeper does pretty much the same thing



The One+ cordless hedge trimmer weighs only 6.2 pounds and features 18-inch dual action blades, 2,400 strokes per minute and a 3/8-inch cut capacity.

at featherweight 4 pounds while generating a 120-mph air current to blow away leaves and debris. The One+ unit features an over-molded grip and is specifically



Lithium-ion batteries hold a charge longer without fading compared to nickel-cadmium batteries, and they recharge faster—in about an hour.

designed for use on patios and other hard surfaces.

The One+ cordless hedge trimmer is simple but sweet for shaping shrubs and small trees, with



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The One+ lawn tools round out with an 18V sweeper and 10" Chainsaw.

18-inch dual action blades, 2,400 strokes per minute and a 3/8-inch cut capacity. Rounding out the workshop is the One+ cordless chainsaw, which comes with 10-inch bar and chain, and push-button oiler. Each tool in the lineup is designed especially for homeowner convenience and ease of use,

and backed by a 2-year warranty.

Keep in mind that battery-powered lawn tools will have a limited run time, so consider that when choosing a tool for your home. Depending on the tool in question, you may only get 12 to 15 minutes per battery charge even with the lithium-ion technology. However,

consider the time you spend blowing leaves off a driveway; for many homeowners such a task takes less than ten minutes to complete. If, however, you have a lot of land or a long list of time-consuming chores to conquer, then some gas-powered lawn equipment will be a more practical choice.



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The Craftsman 4-Cycle Straight Shaft Trimmer includes both Incredi-Pull and Plug-In Power Start technologies for painless power-ups.

tugged on the rope of a mower until you collapse in exhaustion under the sizzling sun of a punishing summer? Join the club.

The engineers for Craftsman feel your pain, as seen with the company's new Speed Start Technology for 2-cycle and 4-cycle string trimmers (www.craftsman.com). With Speed Start, users have a few different options to start the engine with ease.

The first feature is Incredi-Pull technology, which has actually been around a few years. This is standard on all Craftsman 2-cycle and 4-cycle line trimmer models and makes use of optimized recoil technology for easier pull-starts. A slow and steady pull of the starter rope releases energy from a pre-wound spring that turns over the engine for ignition. When the starting cord is released, the spring is recharged for the next restart. This feature makes for easier starting every time.

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Patents Pending

Power Bit Starter (#85952) and Plug-In Power Start (#85951). Both of these features completely eliminate the need to pull-start the engine. With the Power Bit

Start, homeowners can use a cordless drill to quickly start their trimmer. Simply insert the bit into any 1,000 RPM or higher drill chuck and push the special one-

way bit starter into the engine socket. Once engaged, trigger the drill to power-up the engine.

Alternatively, the Plug-In Power Start tool is a self-contained electric starter motor with the starting bit already installed. Just plug it into a standard wall socket and insert the one-way drive bit into the engine socket. Press the trigger, and the engine starts immediately. The Power Bit Start is standard on select trimmer models, and both the Power Bit Start and Plug-In Power Start are available as add-ons for all new gas-powered Craftsman trimmers.

HOMELITE EZ CLEAN

The new Homelite EZ Clean is a sensible solution for deck and patio cleaning. The EZ Clean is designed to distribute the force of the pressure washer over a broader cleaning swath for greater efficiency when cleaning large surface areas. Cleaning a driveway or sidewalk with a spray wand will work, but it will also take a lot of



The Homelite EZ Clean pressure-washing system takes the hassle out of cleaning large surface areas. The product is available as an attachment for an existing washer, as an electric pressure washer, or as a gas-powered unit.

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time and generally leave uneven streaking over the surface where the water stream struck different areas with varying force. Washing large surfaces with a pressure washer nozzle is similar to mowing a lawn with a string trimmer. You may eventually get the job done, but expect a long slog and inconsistent results.

This EZ Clean system uses a surface-cleaning deck, similar to a mower deck, that hovers over large surface areas while two nozzles spin at 1,500 RPM. This spinning action provides even, streak-free cleaning in much less time than it takes to clean using a standard pressure-washer wand.

The EZ Clean system offers three products to suit the needs of homeowners. First,



the attachment version is a 15-inch deck that attaches right to your spray wand if you already own a pressure washer. Second, the electric EZ Clean pressure washer comes equipped with the deck, provides simple setup and also functions as a standard pressure washer. Finally, the gas unit is ideal for heavy-duty cleaning jobs, featuring three modes of operation—surface cleaner; standard spray; and detached-surface cleaner for elevated surfaces. **EHT**

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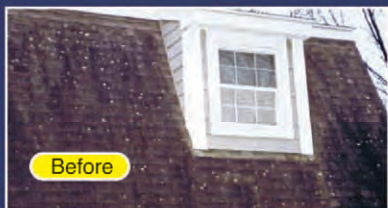
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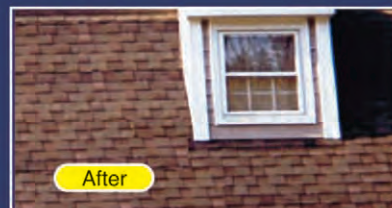
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New Floor Tile Tactics

New Tools, Materials and Techniques for this Traditional Flooring Material



By Monte Burch

Anyway you put it, laying ceramic floor tile is work—physically, mentally, and in closets and cut-up areas, challenging. New materials and tools, however, can take out some of the hassle.

This kitchen project involved a house well over a hundred years old, with a double layer of vinyl flooring and several problems. The original floor was solid, with a solid-oak underlayment. Over that was a yellow pine finished floor. The pine flooring was well worn. The owners began remodeling about 40 years ago and laid down a 1/4-inch plywood “sub-floor” over the pine, then installed vinyl flooring. Years later the old vinyl floor needed replacing. The

old floor, however, was solidly stuck in place and impossible to easily remove. So, they simply nailed down another 1/4-inch plywood subfloor and installed another layer of vinyl flooring. To complicate matters, kitchen cabinets were installed over the flooring.

The first step was to remove the molding and quarter round around the cabinet bottom edges. Then a multifunction vibrating tool, such as the Rockwell SoniCrafter or Craftsman Nextec, was used to cut down through the top vinyl and plywood layer, along the cabinet bottom edges. The tool was also used to cut away a small area to be pried up with a pry bar as a starting

place. Then, a roof tear-off tool was used to rip up the top vinyl/plywood layer. Sure enough, the old vinyl was still tightly adhered, leaving a good sub-base.

GOOD FOUNDATION

Tile is traditionally installed over an uncoupling layer or forgiving shear interface, a supportive underlayment. An uncoupling layer allows the tiled surface to move independently of, or be ‘uncoupled’ from, the subfloor to prevent cracks in the tiles and grout.

For an uncoupling layer on this project, we used Schluter-DITRA, an innovative underlayment performing multiple functions. Schluter-DITRA is a polyethylene membrane with a grid structure of square cavities, each cut back in a dovetail configuration, and an anchoring fleece laminated to the underside. The product is bonded to the substrate using



Laying floor tile is a common but often daunting do-it-yourself job. The right tools and materials can remove a great deal of the hassle.

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thinset mortar. The anchoring fleece on the underside of Schluter-DITRA fully engages in the mortar to provide a mechanical bond to the substrate. Tile is

installed over the underlayment using a thin-bed method in such a way that the mortar becomes mechanically anchored in the square cutback cavities of the

DITRA matting. Designed specifically for ceramic tile and dimensional stone installations, DITRA serves not only as an uncoupling layer but also as a waterproofing membrane and vapor-management layer.

The Schluter-DITRA product performs all these functions while still providing adequate support and load distribution

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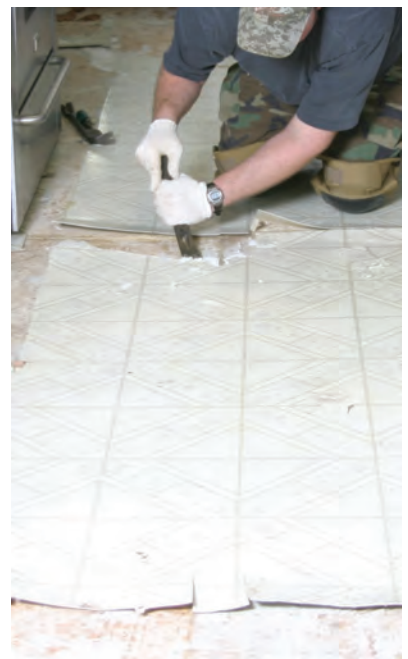
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In the job shown, a double layer of 1/4-inch plywood and two vinyl floor coverings existed. The top vinyl and plywood layers were first removed.



The old vinyl was cut into strips for easier removal.



The Rockwell multi-purpose vibrating tool was used to cut through the vinyl and 1/4" plywood subfloor around the edges of the kitchen cabinets.



Then, a roofer's tear-off tool made quick work of removing the old flooring.

for the tile covering. When placed on a solid foundation, columns or pillars can support tremendous loads. The same physical principle applies to DITRA installations. Column-like mortar structures are formed in the cutback cavities of the matting. Loads are transferred from the tile covering through these column-like mortar structures to the substrate. Since DITRA is virtually incompressible within the tile assembly, the advantages of uncoupling are achieved without sacrificing load-distribution capabilities.

Schluter-DITRA comes in a roll, which is much easier to work with than solid systems. The material is easy to cut with scissors or a sharp knife. Since

it's flexible, it's easier to get the material into smaller spaces, such as closets and hallways. Cut the material to fit, including cuts for heating ducts and any irregularities, and lay it dry to test the fit.

The underlayment can be installed over a number of flooring systems, but it's important to carefully read and follow directions for the various materials, including the types of thinset mortar to be used. Installation, however, is quite easy. Using the proper thinset mortar suitable for the particular substrate, apply the mortar using a 1/4-by-3/16-inch, or a 5/16-by-5/16-inch V-notched trowel, or the Schluter-DITRA trowel, which features a 11/64-by-11/64-inch



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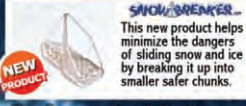


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square notch design. Note the thinset mortar should be mixed to a fairly fluid consistency (a bit thinner than normal), but still be able to hold a notch.

Next, apply the DITRA to the floor, fleece side down. Solidly embed the matting into the bonding mortar using a float or screed trowel and good, even pressure. For joining sections of the product, simply butt sections of adjoining sheets. Raise a corner of the matting to check coverage. Proper installation results in full contact between the fleece webbing and the thinset mortar.

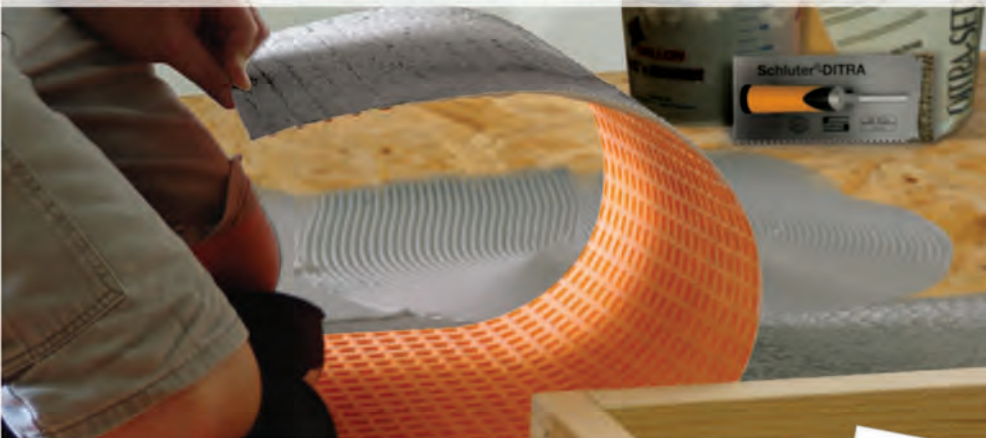
Tile can be installed over the underlayment immediately; no need to wait for the mortar to cure. Fill the cut-back cavities with unmodified thinset mortar and comb additional mortar



Schluter DITRA is a flexible, grid-like underlayment with fleece backing and square cavities that form column-like mortar structures for excellent load distribution.

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PROFILE OF INNOVATION

- Schluter®-DITRA provides uncoupling, which eliminates the major cause of cracking and delaminating of the tiled surface
- Waterproofing protects material beneath the tiles
- 95% lighter than cement backerboard or plywood
- Ideal for use over various substrates, such as plywood, OSB, concrete, gypsum, and existing vinyl flooring; used in both interior and exterior applications
- Only 1/8" thick
- Quick and easy to install: no special tools or fasteners necessary; tiles can be applied immediately after DITRA



FORTRESS

Iron Railing & Fence Systems





Schluter DITRA is rolled in place and cut to fit with scissors or a sharp knife.

over the mat using a trowel that is appropriate for the size of tile. Solidly embed the tiles in the setting material. Periodically remove and check a tile to ensure full mortar coverage is being obtained.

TILE TOOLS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We also found other tiling tools invaluable. The new Bosch



The proper thinset mortar is mixed.



Spread the thinset mortar in place using a notched trowel.



The DITRA is pressed firmly in place using a float or trowel. Lift up a corner to make sure the mortar is bonding well with the fleece underside.

Wall/Floor Covering Laser projects three lines—a center line and two 90-degree lines—and can also be used for 45-degree tile layout. The tool projects laser lines positioned in front of a laser base for easy centering over a point for precise adjustment. The bright, highly-



Lay out the floor tile.



The new Bosch Wall/Floor Covering Laser projects three lines, providing a means of determining room squareness, a guide line for tile, even for 45-degree tile setting.

visible laser lines are raised from the surface to project over uneven areas or obstructions.

One of the biggest problems in laying any type of flooring material is determining if the room is square, or how far out of square it is. This can be a major factor in determining

CUSTOM THRESHOLD

With the tile and Schluter materials added to the existing plywood subfloor and old vinyl, the finished tile floor came to about 3/4-inch above a beautifully refinished old wooden floor in an adjoining room. A wide threshold was used to transition between the two floors, made from a tapered piece of matching wood. A 1/2-inch wood strip was first glued to the back of the threshold piece with white glue and newspaper between. The threshold piece was then run through a planer to cut an even and precise taper. The wooden strip on the back was then removed with a wide chisel, and the tapered threshold was fastened in place.



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the pattern of laying the flooring material, and is especially important with ceramic or stone tile. For instance, you might start laying tile against a long wall, only

to find the row going off at the adjoining wall. Simply place the Bosch laser in one corner of the measuring surface. Switch on the tool and align it so the zero-

degree laser line runs along the long side and the 90-degree laser line runs along the short side of the measuring surface. You can quickly determine the squareness of the room. The single center line can be used to lay out the first tile line. Incidentally, the unit comes with a detachable magnetic base that can be fastened to vertical surfaces for wall tile.

When I first started laying tile a number of years ago, they were cut with an old scoring tool. The tile is laid in place, scored with the cutter, and then

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Tile can be set immediately over the DITRA. Here, a hallway was prepared with the DITRA, and then the tile was laid around the corner and into the kitchen.



Tile is set in the same manner as for other underlayments, except the thinset mortar is mixed a little thinner.



Spacers ensure even tile joints.

snapped over the edge of a sturdy support. Not only was the technique time consuming, but many tiles were wasted when they didn't snap properly. Then came the "push-through" tile saw and things were easier, but it still took some effort to precisely cut large floor tile.

With this project I used a Chicago Electric Power Tools, 1-1/2 horsepower Bridge Tile Saw



A Chicago Electric Power Tools Bridge Tile Saw, from Harbor Freight Tools, makes quick and easy work of cutting the large floor tiles.



The tile is securely held in place on the table, and the wet-saw is pulled through the tile. Even 45-degree or other angled cuts are easy and precise.

with stand from Harbor Freight Tools. Cutting tile, even large floor tile, suddenly became an easy, and more important, precise task. With a push-through saw, the tile is pushed into the saw blade, much in the same manner as a woodworking table saw. With a bridge saw such as this, the tile is positioned, and the saw blade is drawn across



The bridge can also be tilted up to 45 degrees for cutting tile edges at an angle.



Cutting notches is fast with a bridge-type tile saw.

the securely held tile, in the manner of a radial arm or sliding miter saw. I find this to be the most precise tile-cutting method.

The saw comes with a folding stand that also holds a water tray. It cuts floor and wall tiles up to 24-by-24 inches, marble and brick up to 25-inches long. It will bevel-cut from zero to 45 degrees (left) with a maximum depth of cut of 1-inch at 90 and 45 degrees. The rip fence has a scale of zero to 8-1/4-inches in 1/8-inch increments, as well as

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*DL Labs, 2008



DO IT YOURSELF

zero to 210 millimeters in 2-millimeter increments. A 7-inch Continuous Rim Diamond Wet Blade, sold separately, makes cutting quick and easy.

THE RIGHT GROUT

With the tile laid, the next step is grouting. I've used



MAPEI Ultracolor Plus Flexible grout is the ideal choice for rooms such as kitchens that may be exposed to moisture.

MAPEI products for a number of years with excellent results. For this project I chose MAPEI UltraColor Plus Flexible Grout. This is often used for grouting floors in supermarkets, restaurants, airports and is ideal for grouting bathrooms and kitchens. This fast-setting and drying, high-performance, anti-efflorescence grout is polymer-modified for joints from 1/8 to 1 inch. The grout is water-repellent with DropEffect technology, which reduces surface absorption to help repel water, dirt and grime from penetrating grout joints. UltraColor Plus also has BioBlock technology to block various types of mold from forming and proliferating on the surface of the grout in humid conditions.

Application is easy, and it



The grout is applied with a rubber float.

dries quickly. Waiting time before finishing is 15 to 30 minutes. The grout is set to foot traffic in approximately three hours. Make sure the surface is clean of all dirt and grit. It's important to mix the grout properly using a mechanical means, such as a mortar paddle chucked in a drill.

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DO IT YOURSELF

Mix with the appropriate amount of water for three minutes. Allow to set for two to three minutes, remix for 30 seconds, and then spread immediately. The grout should be allowed to firm up in the joints sufficiently, usually 15 to 30 minutes, and then wash away with a wet sponge, followed by soft, dry cloths.

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Size	Price/ea.
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FENCE TIPS



A knot called a Trucker's Hitch works on more than just mason's line for laying out fences. I use them anywhere I need constant, dependable leverage, like holding this sapling out of the way.

FROM A PRO

By Mark Clement

***I love fences—
good ones, anyway.***

Shooting my eye down 100 feet of pitch-perfect, parallel fence posts rising true and straight from the earth speaks to my inner carpenter. And, once connected by rails and slats, I love to see how this simple amalgam of boards ignites featureless landscapes and bolsters boring borders. I also enjoy that the mere presence of a fence is pivotal, because fences impact the homeowner and the homeowner's neighbor. I really think it's important that considerate attention be paid to designing and building a structure I'm proud to put my name on.

Detailed here is a Western Red Cedar privacy screen designed to beautify a back yard and erase a poorly maintained rental on the adjoining property. The screen delivers succulent lines for the interior and a crisp, but solid, wall from the outside.

FENCE TIPS FROM A PRO



Shown is the completed fence, constructed from Western Red Cedar.

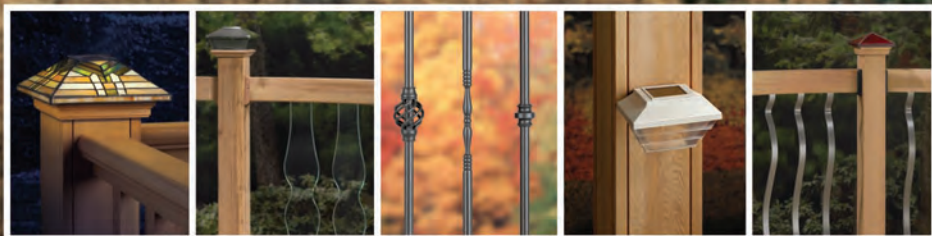
FENCE LAYOUT TECHNIQUES

While every site slings unique challenges, I approach each fence basically the same: I find the property line and immediately set what I call a “control-post”—usually in a corner—and then pull as much layout as possible from there.

Property Line & Control Post. After determining the true property line via the home’s plat plan (usually available via the building department or courthouse records) and/or property stakes, I mark the center of the control-post hole. I lay it out such that wherever the post is set, the exterior face of my fence is 1 inch inside the property line—just in case. Once I know the first post’s location I excavate and set the post using quick-setting concrete.

Corner or End Posts. The next post I lay out and set is an end-post that is in-line with my control post. This post can end up being a corner post. **Clement Carpentry Trick:** If this is a contracting job I set a control post the evening before the job starts in earnest, or do it while someone else unloads the truck or breaks down the lumber package—nobody’s idle while the concrete dries.

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FENCE TIPS FROM A PRO

Layout Stakes. Alternatively, I sometimes mark the site using stakes and string. This works great on long, straight fences where I can overshoot the

fence's actual location with my layout string. The best stake I've used is threaded 2-foot by 1-inch gas pipe.

I use a knot called a Trucker's

Hitch (that delivers a 3-to-1 mechanical advantage) to suck all the sag out of the string. I also use trucker's hitches as come-alongs.

Jig It. For fences where panels are fastened between posts, I sometimes use my site-fabbed U-Jig—basically an 8 foot 2-by-4 with 2-by-4 blocks screwed on each end. I butt or screw it to the control post then, once fixed, it marks the next hole



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Shown here is a U-Jig in action, used for consistent spacing of the posts.

location—no measuring required. To dig, I remove it and set the post. Sometimes it makes sense to screw several U-Jigs between posts as I go. This helps keep everything running straight and minimizes mistakes before pouring concrete.

Posts and Slats Wild. I almost always install posts and slats wild, or too tall, and then trim them all at the end of the installation to final size.

How I Do It. Some crews excavate and pre-set all their



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FENCE TIPS FROM A PRO



I used the Toro Dingo with auger attachment for this fence and it worked great for drilling holes—even in zero-clearance applications.

posts at once, then go back to the rails and slats. For fences that don't end evenly in an 8-foot matrix, this can end badly because the last panel ends up 2 feet wide (or whatever), which looks really out of place. Full or close-to-full panels are what you're after. Furthermore, I like my concrete to be in the hole drying while I advance down the line. So, I set 3 to 5 posts, then pour. When I come back in the morning, concrete has set up all night.

And, measuring four posts ahead lets me see if I need to recalculate the panel width to fit the space (knocking them down to 6-1/2 or 7—or up to 9 feet—works to trick the eye). This creates the illusion of full panels, without having to make very detailed measurements.

CEDAR FENCE: STAIN & POSTS

This Western Red Cedar privacy screen is gorgeous: Rough-sawn 10-foot 4-by-4 and 8-foot 2-by-4 make up the rails, caps and posts, while dual-textured tongue-and-groove siding—smooth-side in, rough-side out—make up the slats.

Step 1: Stain & Posts. Cedar has more than proven itself as a durable material. Nevertheless, The Western Red Cedar Lumber Association's recommended best practice is to apply two coats of oil-based stain to extend the material's service life in ground-contact applications. That was no problem on this fence because it was planned to be stained anyway. I double soak the end grain of the boards for extra protection.



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Spreading out the material so you can get to it with a paintbrush requires maximum work-space (and you want to brush it; no rolling). Sawhorses and stickers work, but the JawHorse worktables that I make work better—just clamp a 2-by-4 on edge in the jaw of each one for a massive but stable work surface. I hasten to add that while I like to pre-stain as much as possible all at once, this much material had to be stained in stages—posts, then rails, then slats.

Post Layout. For rails to fit between posts, the holes must be augered dead-on according to the layout. Enter the U-Jigs. Before setting posts, I poured 4 inches of gravel (cheaper in bulk than bags) to facilitate water movement around the



Western Red Cedar lasts longer if water can move around the bottom of the post, so before pouring concrete I drop about 4 inches of gravel into the hole and tamp it down with the blunt end of a digging bar.

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I set my combination square to mark rail layout—again, it's more accurate than measuring every time.

post bottom, and then set the posts plumb along my string line.

Post Detailing. Even though this was a zero-clearance installation, I could bore my footing holes using Toro's sub-compact loader—what a time saver. And, before setting the posts I poured gravel into each hole to facilitate water movement around the bottom of the post, extending the posts' in-ground service life.



Pre-drilling pocket holes with my countersink and pre-setting screws makes installing the rails on layout faster and easier. I like screwing rather than nailing in this case because screws sock the materials up tight with one another.



Even though I use guide blocks for locating the top rail, I double check periodically with a level.



Clement Carpentry Trick: Once you have the bottom rail set level, use cleats (aka guide blocks) for the rest of your layout. They're faster and more accurate than measuring.

FENCE RAILS

For this fence, I trimmed the rails on the miter saw then pre-stained the ends.

Laying Out a Graded Site. This grade pitches down. To get a stepped effect I treated the posts as pairs, using the uphill post as the control point for positioning the bottom rail—8 inches from grade to the rail bottom.

Marking Posts. I set my combination square to uniformly mark all rail locations 2-1/2 inches in from the exterior post face, without measuring each one. Next, I mark the next four posts. This shows how the rails are stepping up, and I can ensure they look right and minimize compounding errors if something goes wrong.

Installation. Pocket holes and pre-set screws in the rail ends



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FENCE TIPS FROM A PRO



The T&G siding came in 16' lengths and needed to be trimmed to size. Instead of measuring each one, I jugged up my miter saw cut-station and cut them—accurately—at production speed. What a time saver.

For calculating materials, each panel takes 18 full slats and one ripper. Rip cuts are much easier and faster on a table saw.

are the key to a quick and solid installation.

Top Rails. Clement Carpentry Trick: Run cleats from the bottom rail (48 inches here) to the top rail location and install without measuring. I also double-check level periodically as a failsafe.



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Cap. Repeat the cleat trick, this time with an 8-1/2 inch cleat for the top cap. Always remember to square-check the installation for tighter tolerances.

FENCE BOARDS

To size and square the siding/slats I jiggled out my miter



The Western Red Cedar siding slats are straight but may need a little nudging to lock to their mate. Tap, don't smash, for best results.

In zero-clearance applications like this one, articulate the slat behind your rails and cap, pull it tight to the rail, then fasten with screws.

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FENCE TIPS FROM A PRO



Install posts high—or “wild”—and trim to final height after the fence is installed.

saw, gang-cut them, and then pre-stained the end grains.

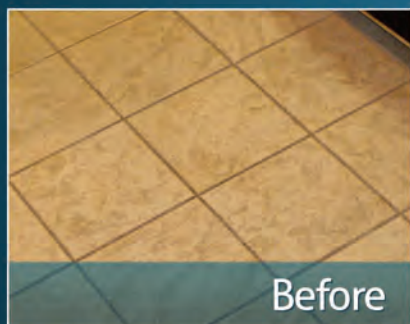
With nineteen full boards and one ripper filling an 8-foot panel, it helps to have a table saw on site to save time and improve quality on the rip cut.

Once I managed the tilt-and-lift scenario of getting the slats between the rails and existing fence, I touched each slat to the bottom of the top cap—gently—then pulled it to the rails. To seat the groove over the tongue, the boards might require a little persuasion. Again, just an easy tap is all it takes. Next, I fastened from the inside with 2-1/2 inch ceramic-coated screws.

The last step is to dial in the posts. To achieve a uniform step, I measure final post height—4 inches above the high-side post cap—and cut. Finish up by staining the end-grain for matching color and extra weather protection in the years ahead. **EHT**

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COUNTER INTELLIGENCE

Installing Flat-lay Laminate Countertops

Not everything should be set in stone. Laminate counters still have their place in many home improvement applications.

Realtors often caution against over-building in some neighborhoods where values are established by comparable houses in the community. In these cases, it's wise to select materials that keep costs down. This doesn't mean you have to go with fake wood grain or avocado green. Large varieties in color and textures are available with today's laminates.

One of the big advantages to flat lay laminate countertops is the ability to fit them precisely to irregular wall shapes and a variety of countertop sizes. To do this, you should plan to fit and fasten the sub-decks to the cabinets or strong backs first, and then fit and install the laminate.

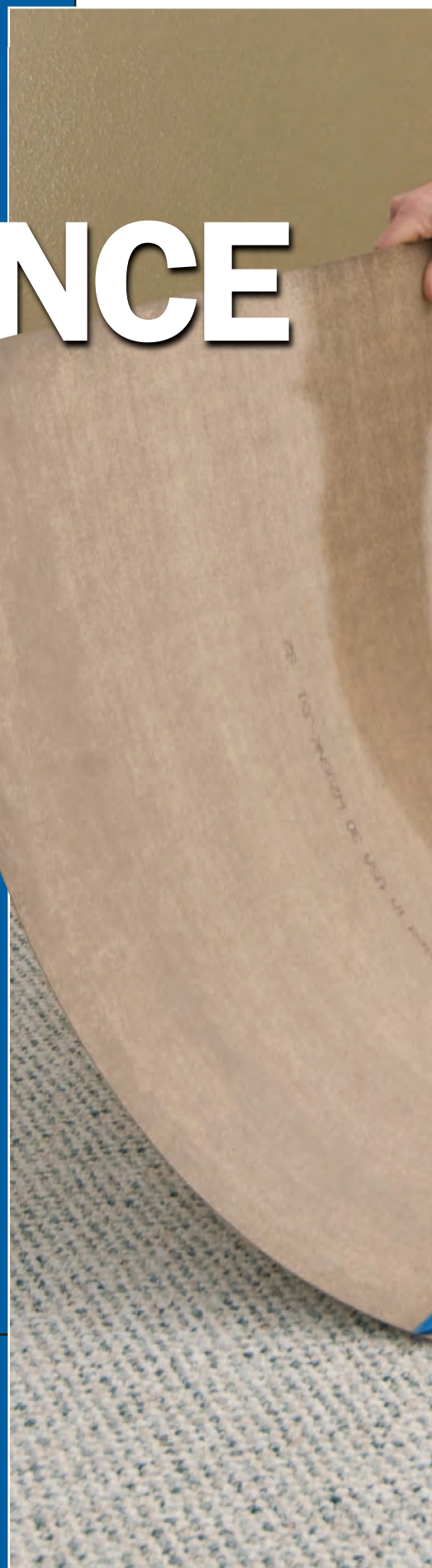
DESIGN OPTIONS

Because flat-lay laminate can be fit very closely to the wall, it works well for desktop surfaces where no backsplash will be used.

When you want to use a backsplash for kitchens, baths and utility rooms, you have a number of options including tile, stone or matching laminate. One of my favorites is a 3/4-inch thick backsplash with a laminate face and wood accent cap to match the counter edges.

I prefer to use a hardwood self-edge, which can be stained or painted to match the cabinets. For this application we cut the countertops for a 1/4-inch overhang past the face frame of the base cabinets. We then install a 3/4-by-1-1/2-inch

By Larry Walton





COUNTER INTELLIGENCE



When preparing countertops for laminate, sand everything flat and smooth including seams and the self-edge connection.

One of the ways we eliminate seams is to buy large pieces of laminate to cut out L-shaped sections.



counter edge, which extends the overhang to the desired one inch.

Countertop-grade particleboard is my favorite material for laminate applications. The material is strong, consistent, smooth, flat and bonds well to contact cement. Plywood underlayment is not countertop-grade.

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Once the countertops are fastened to the cabinets, apply the self-edge with carpenter's glue and nails, either flush to the counter or slightly higher. When the glue is set, sand the self-edge flush with the counter top. Make sure the countertops are well fastened, flat, smooth and clean.



After thoroughly scoring the laminate from the back, bend the piece until it snaps.

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COUNTER INTELLIGENCE

TIGHT FIT

Now you can determine the best size and shape of the laminate pieces to fit your application. Knowing what is available is important. I will sometimes order 5-by-8-foot pieces so I can cover areas without seams or put a seam at the sink opening where only a couple of inches will show. I can usually make good use of the material cut from the inside of these pieces.

We also order 30-inch wide pieces to use 25 inches on the deck and 5 inches for the back-splash. So, knowing what sizes are available or what sizes the wholesaler is willing to cut is important.

Once you have the materials, block out the pieces and cut them to approximate size. Allow one



Occasionally we need to cut a piece for a counter that wraps around the outside of a corner. In these cases the cut needs to be accurate, so I drill a hole where the two cuts meet to keep the laminate from cracking.



One of the big advantages of flat-lay laminate is that you can dry-fit and scribe the material to fit the wall precisely.

After scribing the material with a pencil, we use tin snips to trim the laminate to fit.



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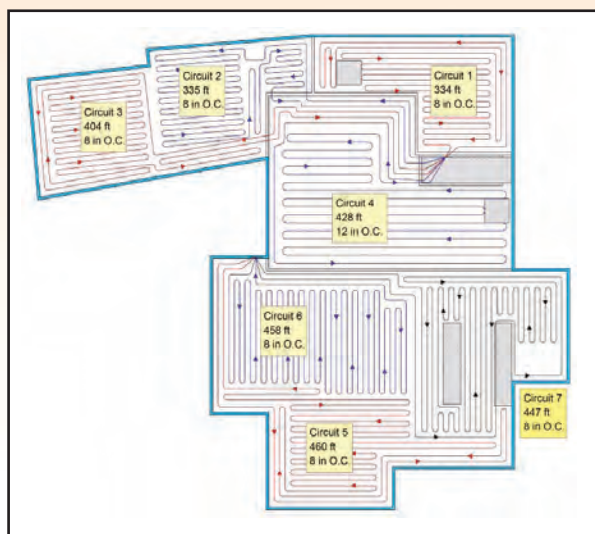
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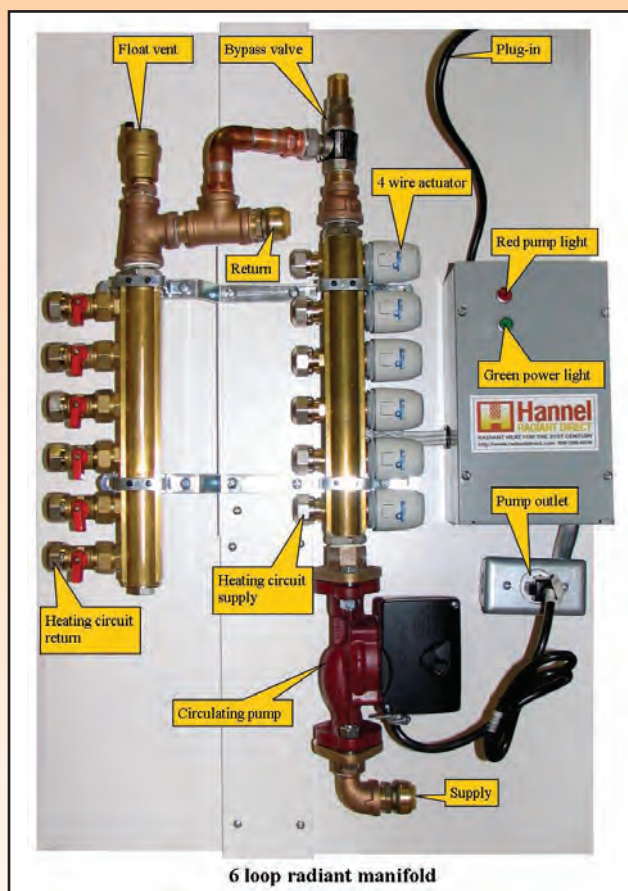
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COUNTER INTELLIGENCE

inch or so of overhang to leave room for scribing along out-of-square or less-than-straight walls. We use a straight edge and laminate cutting tool for most of the initial cuts.

Put the roughed-out pieces in place and begin scribing them in to fit the walls. If a piece is blocked in by two perpendicular walls, fit one wall first then scribe it to the other wall. At this point you are dry-fitting the material so you can take your time and get everything right before opening a glue can.

Hopefully you've been able to eliminate all the seams in your



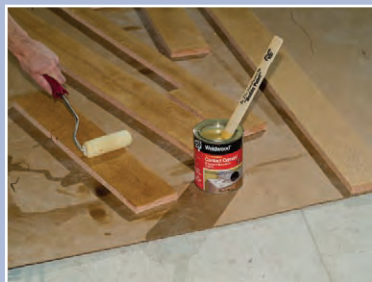
After scribing and before gluing, we trace the self-edge near the walls and trim it close where we know the router can't reach.



In most cases you will be fitting the laminate precisely to the walls, so it's a good idea to put some reference points on the plastic as well as on the wall, which aids getting proper alignment when everything is glued.

BACKSPLASH BUILD

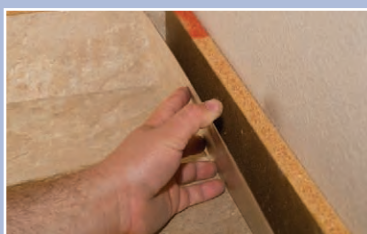
One of my favorite backsplashes is made with 3/4-inch countertop material with the face laminated in place and the top capped in wood trim. Here's how it's done:



We cut the backsplash pieces to size and apply contact cement before nailing them into place.



We use this Virutex C015L Laminite Slitter/Cutter for making backsplash laminate pieces and counter edge strips.



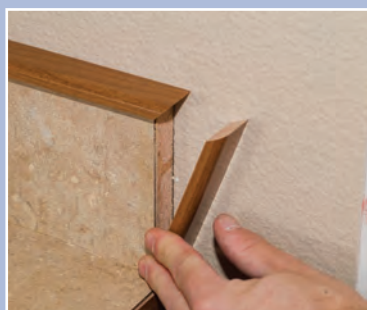
After nailing the backsplash boards in place, we fit and glue the laminate pieces.



We use a small roller to press the laminate onto the backsplash.



Trim the laminate flush with the top of the backsplash boards with a laminate trim router.



We machine and fasten a small wood cap that slightly overhangs the laminate back splash.



The wood cap matches the self-edge and the cabinets to tie it all together.



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COUNTER INTELLIGENCE

layout. If you have one, try to plan it for the sink opening. During the fitting process, you can overlap the pieces that will be seamed together. If the seam is at a sink opening, cut out some of the extra material from the sink cut-out area so the seam-matching portion will be smaller.

Slightly back-bevel one of the seam edges with a flat file. Overlap this edge over the other piece and trace along the newly back-beveled edge so you know where to cut the bottom piece. Cut the bottom piece very slightly larger than the pencil mark and file to the mark while applying a slight back bevel. Fit the seam together and make adjustments as needed.

With all of the pieces blocked in, scribed to the walls and the



I change the filters on my respirator mask from dust to charcoal before opening the contact cement can.



I usually pour the contact from the can and then spread it.

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It's important to spread the glue out to the edges of both the laminate and the countertops.

My favorite stickers for laminate installs are recycled slats from vinyl mini-blinds. They are very light, low profile and offer limited contact to the counter and the laminate.

seams fitting properly, trace along the self-edge near the walls so you can cut by hand the first 8 inches or so close to the self-edge. Your router design will determine how close you can get to the wall. What cannot be reached with the router will be filed by hand, so it's best not to



leave extra material next to the walls.

Make two or three matching marks on the laminate and the walls so the material can be returned to the exact position after gluing. Remove the pieces and place them upside down on a clean, smooth surface.

GLUE IN PLACE

Apply contact cement to the laminate and to the countertops. Be particularly careful to get good coverage right out to the edges.

Allow the contact cement to dry to the point where you can touch it without removing glue. The glue may be very slightly tacky, but the idea is that it is dry and not wet.

Place separator strips on the

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COUNTER INTELLIGENCE



Check the contact cement to make sure it is dry before applying the laminate. I use the backs of my fingers so I don't end up with glue on my fingertips.



Put down enough stickers to prevent the two surfaces from touching.

countertop to keep the two glued surfaces from touching each other prematurely. Warning: Contact cement bonds to contact cement instantly. You must take care that these two surfaces do not touch because you will not be able to move them without causing damage.

Carefully position one of the laminate pieces using the wall marks as a guide for precise alignment. Pull one or two of the separator strips from one end and touch the laminate to the counter. I usually work from closed area to open area. Pull the separators out one at a time working the laminate down as you go.

If you have a seam, place the second laminate in position after the first piece is firmly in place.

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After carefully placing the laminate, pull the stickers from the areas you want to touch down first.

INSTALLATION OPTIONS

Post-form (a strange name for pre-made) counters are available with the laminate already on them, but that's not always the best way to go. Aside from all of the limitations in size and transitions, post-forms can present some real problems when it comes to fitting, anchoring, supporting and making splices. For example, the post-form solution for a counter with 90-degree turns (L, U or even G shaped kitchens) is to put a long 45-degree splice in the deck. The seam is not pretty and sometimes difficult to pull off, especially if the walls have some curves or are out of square. However, flat-laying laminate in place can usually handle these kitchen shapes with a tiny seam at the sink, or with no seam at all, while allowing a ton of flexibility to scribe in irregularities.

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COUNTER INTELLIGENCE



After pulling all of the stickers, roll the laminate to make sure the entire area is solidly down.

Once the laminate is thoroughly rolled, you can trim it with a router without delay.



Carefully touch the second piece down along the seam line first, working away from the seam.

Use a roller to make sure the laminate is touching the countertop everywhere.

Use a router with a laminate bit or a flush cut bit to trim the laminate to the self-edge.

You can add a bevel to the countertop edge by cutting both the laminate and the self-edge with a bevel-cutting router bit. Where the router cannot reach to the walls, match the router cut with a file to create a crisp consistent look to the new laminate countertop. **EHT**

Editor's Note: Photos by Mark and Tim Walton

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For counters with a wood self-edge, bevel just the edge of the laminate to take off the sharp corner. You can also chamfer the laminate with a portion of the wood edge to add another style line. Or, attach a laminated and beveled decorative edge as seen on the cover of this magazine.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Plastic laminate
- Tin snips
- Laminate cutter
- Contact cement
- Paintbrush and/or roller
- Power sander
- Router with flush-cut bit
- Dowel rods or other strips
- Straightedge
- Flat file

You can pick up plastic laminate at the local home-improvement center, but the selection will probably be limited. For more choices, track down a store that either specializes in countertops (large markets) or a flooring company. In our area, the flooring company can show you samples and sell you the product. You can pick up the material at the store, or the retailer will write up a slip so you can pick it up at the wholesaler.

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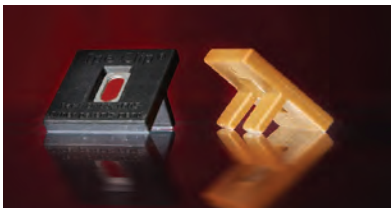


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RE-FOCUSING THE FOCAL POINT

Too much window and not enough wall is a big problem when upgrading some kitchens. Here's how to solve it.

By Mark Clement

I'm certain many carpenters and designers will disagree, but in my book a primary focal point in any kitchen is not the tricked-out fridge, the luscious cabinets or the 87-burner stove, but the humble sink drain.

Most sink drains are centered under a window on the exterior wall. And come hell or high water they try to stay there no matter how poorly the fridge fits, or how far away you have to stick the dishwasher so the door opens. This tiny plumbing fixture serves as the control point from which everything on that wall—and by extension, all walls—is laid out.

So, what if the fridge doesn't fit?

Solution: Make the window smaller. This enables you to change the centerline of the window, which enables you to “re-center” that sink drain. And, this trick works even if the window isn't dead-centered in the wall span.

The technique works best turning a double window into a single unit. Installation requires building a 1-by box (or sleeve) to fit through the existing window's rough-opening; the new window is installed inside the sleeve. Note: This is also a good trick for replacing windows in a basement.

RE-FOCUSING THE FOCAL POINT

LAYOUT—MEASURING THE TOTAL OPENING

I started by explaining to our cabinet designer at American Woodmark that we could shrink

the window. She stitched different cabinets together to compile a good design, which further refined the window area's size for me. Once she



Laying out the window—including trim, paint reveals and the site-built sleeve (or jamb)—starts with the existing framing. In a stick-framed house the jack studs typically determine left and right. In old houses, you may find the window has been worked on several times and you're altering an alteration.

determined which cabinets fit the newly defined wall space, I knew what I had to work with. Next, I refined the exact sizes of things, including the rough opening in the framing, paint strip (if any,) trim size and actual window size.

Start with Demo. Strip the window casing and sill so you can see the framing and/or drywall. You really don't want to alter the framing if you don't have to, so your absolute left and right in this

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RE-FOCUSING THE FOCAL POINT



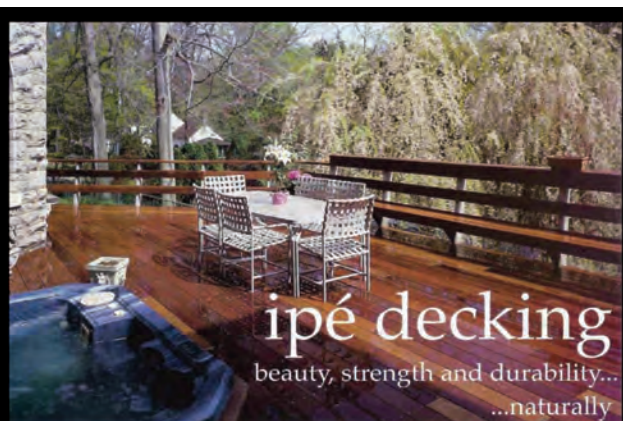
Working on a flat surface, I screw the top and bottom to the sides to assemble the sleeve. Fypon PVC 1-by is my go-to material here. This material will get wet inside and out, and I want it to last.

procedure—and your designer should have these measurements—are the jack studs.

Measuring: Total Opening Width. With the plan in-hand, I mark the wall beneath the existing window for cabinet locations. The upper cabinets to the left and right define the opening's total width (the actual window unit will be several inches smaller than the opening). I also reconcile this against the planned base cabinet's centerline below.

I draw plumb lines on the wall to show the upper cabinets and mark my overall opening's centerline on the window framing. This should be the same centerline as the new window itself—this is an important measurement.

Measuring: Total Opening Height. Height is determined, by



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and large, by the existing framing. Although you can alter it, the existing sill height and head height are usually fine in my experience.

DETERMINING ACTUAL WINDOW SIZE

There's a lot to think about here at the same time. Grab a pencil and a notebook. Detailed sketches help. I start figuring out my exact window size by considering how the trim will look once everything is done.

For example, if I have room with an opening of 40 inches, I'll need about 2 inches for paint, 3-1/2 inches for trim, and 1/4-inch for reveal between casing and jamb on each side of the window. That's 5-3/4 inches left and 5-3/4 inches right, which is



Once you're ready to install the sleeve, remove the existing window.

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RE-FOCUSING THE FOCAL POINT



If necessary, clean up masonry openings with a small chipping hammer.

40 minus 11-1/2 inches. This leaves 28-1/2 inches for actual window.

For a smaller opening, terminating my casing right into the cabinets is the best play, leaving no room for paint.

While this approach may seem persnickety, it's the best. Windows with trim that's too skinny or too wide simply don't look right. Trim always tells the story of the carpenter who built the project, so gloss over this at your own peril.

And, I don't order the window the actual size of the opening—I leave 1/4 inch all the way around the window, so now I know I need a window 28 inches wide. Confused yet?

I then repeat the same process to determine height.

ORDERING THE WINDOW

When I shrink a window opening I want to maximize the remaining space. I also want an easily operable window so a casement unit is the go-to style. It cranks out so you can operate it without climbing on the counter, and you can get a lot of fresh air in or kitchen odors out (or plumes of smoke, if I'm cooking). Also, there are new regional Energy Star guidelines, so check on that before ordering.

LAYING OUT THE SLEEVE

Once I take delivery of the window I start building. First, I double-check that the window is the right size. I've never had a problem with my supplier, Simonton Windows.

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I then measure my wall thickness and exterior trim reveals to determine the width of the sleeve; usually a 1-by-12 ripped to width works fine. I want the sleeve dead-flush with the interior drywall and consistent with the other window assemblies on the exterior. (Note: For basement build-outs with concrete or stone foundation walls plus 2-by framing, walls can be as much as 24 inches thick, so I'll either use 3/4-inch birch plywood or edge-joined PVC to cover that distance.)

I then build the sleeve using PVC 1-by material from Fypon. I go with PVC because there's about an 800-percent chance this material will get wet inside and out, and I don't want it to rot.



Using a couple of levels, register your sleeve flush to the interior drywall and keep the foot-jamb (bottom) as level as possible. Then, with your third hand, pop a couple of tacks to hold the unit before shimming the jamb plumb and straight.



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RE-FOCUSING THE FOCAL POINT



Before nailing it off, shim the window as necessary in the opening to ensure plumb and square installation.

ASSEMBLING THE SLEEVE

Assembly requires a miter saw, framing square and a drill/driver. Screw the tops to the sides with 2-inch screws. To get the length of the top and bottom pieces, add 2 inches to the window's width.

The sides are the window height plus 1/2 inch. I cut everything on my slide compound miter saw.

On a flat surface I screw the tops into the sides, squaring them up first with a framing square. Another good thing about PVC is that I don't have to pre-drill and countersink as with wood. I then tip the sleeve up and test the window fit (easier now than later).

REMOVE THE EXISTING WINDOW

Strip the existing window back to the framing. Pack in the framing as necessary. Remember not to frame to exact dimensions. I like to place studs at least a 1/2 inch "fat" for my rough opening. You usually need some wiggle room. Shims make up the difference.

INSTALL THE SLEEVE

The crucial control point for setting the sleeve through the wall is getting it flush—all the way around—with the interior drywall.

To do so, mark the center of the bottom piece. Install the sleeve through the hole. Align the centerline on the jamb

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with the centerline on the framing or drywall.

Register the interior edge of the sleeve with the plane of the drywall. I do this with a level held across each corner. Adjust carefully and double-check everything.

Tack it with finish nails. Re-check square and plumb. If the nails deformed the sleeve, pry it back to straight. Shim, and then nail it off.

Then, install the window. Each window is different, so follow the manufacturer's instructions.

CAULK AND INSULATE

Whether summer or winter, I try to seal the job before wrapping up for the day. In summer, bugs see light through cracks and buzz in. In winter, it's cold.

I caulk the window to the jamb and fill the gap between sleeve and framing with low-expanding foam insulation.

As quickly as possible after sealing the window, I re-frame filler studs for the old window and re-apply sheeting, paper and cladding.

Finally, we finish where we started: interior trim details. I apply the interior trim, caulk, fill nail holes and paint.

And, the trick is complete. No one knows there was a big old honkin' double window there. The new window looks like it was always part of the house. **EHT**

Editor's Note: Mark Clement is co-host of MyFixitUpLife, a licensed contractor, and author of The Carpenter's Notebook.



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DIY Faucet Replacement

A Step-by-step Guide to Upgrading a Bathroom Faucet



By Matt Weber

easy visibility beneath a sink can lead to confusion for first-timers. Recently, the EHT staff replaced a couple of faucets and took the opportunity to shoot the installation steps in our well-lit workshop to illustrate the details. Here's how it went.

STEP BY STEP



1. After shutting off the water supply, use a wrench to unscrew the supply lines and wing nuts beneath the faucet levers.



2. Unscrew the cap of the drain's lift rod so the faucet will slip over it.

Faucets for kitchens and bathrooms are the unsung focal point of the room. All the activity in bathrooms and kitchens revolve around the sink, and the faucet is the sink's crowning jewel. An old, malfunctioning faucet may provide a good reason for replacement, but upgrading the interior décor may be another. The stylish designs and modern metallic finishes of many new

faucets offer not only superior performance and water conservation, but also add dramatic visual impact to the room. Choose from such finishes as chrome, brushed nickel or oil-rubbed bronze in sleek contemporary designs or more conventional styling for traditional appeal.

Replacing a faucet is a fairly straightforward procedure, but the cramped spaces and lack of

SAVING WATER AT THE TAP

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, if we turn off the tap while brushing our teeth, an average household can save as much as 3,000 gallons per year. There are also products that will help save water when the tap is turned on. Similar to the DOE's Energy Star program, the EPA's WaterSense-labeled faucets and faucet accessories (such as aerators) are high-performing, water-efficient fixtures that will help you reduce water use in your home and save money on water bills. WaterSense-labeled bathroom sink faucets and accessories can reduce a sink's water flow by 30 percent or more without sacrificing performance. All products bearing the WaterSense label complete a third-party certification process that includes independent laboratory testing to ensure they meet EPA criteria. By installing WaterSense-labeled bathroom sink faucets or faucet accessories, an average household can save more than 500 gallons each year. Also, since these water savings will reduce demands on water heaters, households will also save energy. Learn more at www.epa.gov/watersense.

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3. Remove the faucet, which should pull right out of the sink, although you may need to break the seal of old plumber's putty or caulk.



4. Use a degreasing product to scrub away any old putty or sealant from the sink.



5. Shown are the faucet components that are included with Moen's Brantford style faucet for 4-inch center sets.



6. Place a bead of plumber's putty along the edge of the plastic putty plate that works as a gasket between the sink and faucet. Apply the plate to the surface of the sink.



7. Insert the threaded shanks of the faucet through the holes of the sink and secure them from below with new wing nuts.

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8. From above, unhook the old pop-up drain cover from the lift lever in the drain pipe and pull it out of the sink.



9. Use a pipe wrench or Channellock pliers to unscrew the retaining nut from the drain assembly. Remove the drain.



10. Apply a bead of plumber's putty beneath the lip of the new drain cap.



11. Seat the new drain cap into the sink hole.



12. The mating component of the drain assembly installs from beneath the sink with a rubber gasket.



13. Apply plumbing sealant to the gasket before installing.

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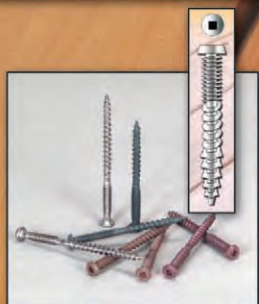
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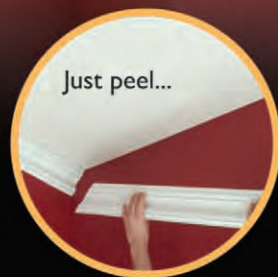
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14. The drain and gasket connect to the drain cap from below with a new retaining nut.



15. Position the drain pipe with the lift-lever hole facing toward the rear of the sink. Fasten the pipe in place with thread seal tape or plastic compression tape, such as Rescue Tape (shown).



16. Thread the lift rod through the top of the faucet.



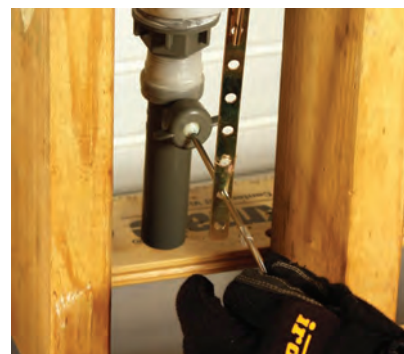
17. Drop in the new drain cover.



18. Install the adjustable extension arm to the lift rod, which connects with a simple thumb screw.



19. Install the ball-and-socket lift lever in the drain. Thread the short end of the lift lever (near the ball) through the hook in the new drain cap. The “ball” is secured in the drain pipe with a nut.



20. Thread the long end of the lever through one of the holes in the extension arm—whichever hole allows easiest operation of the pop-up drain assembly. Finally, use a coupling nut to reconnect the sink drain onto the P-trap in the house, reconnect the water lines, and the new faucet should be ready for use. **EHT**

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According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 532,000 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms, doctors' offices, clinics and other medical settings in 2007 because of injuries related to ladder use. Most injuries are cuts, bruises and fractured bones. Ladders are necessary tools, but if you do not follow the proper safety tips, you could suffer severe injury or death.

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